

THE STANDARD UPHELD AND
OTHER VERSES    
BY MORGAN
SHEPARD    

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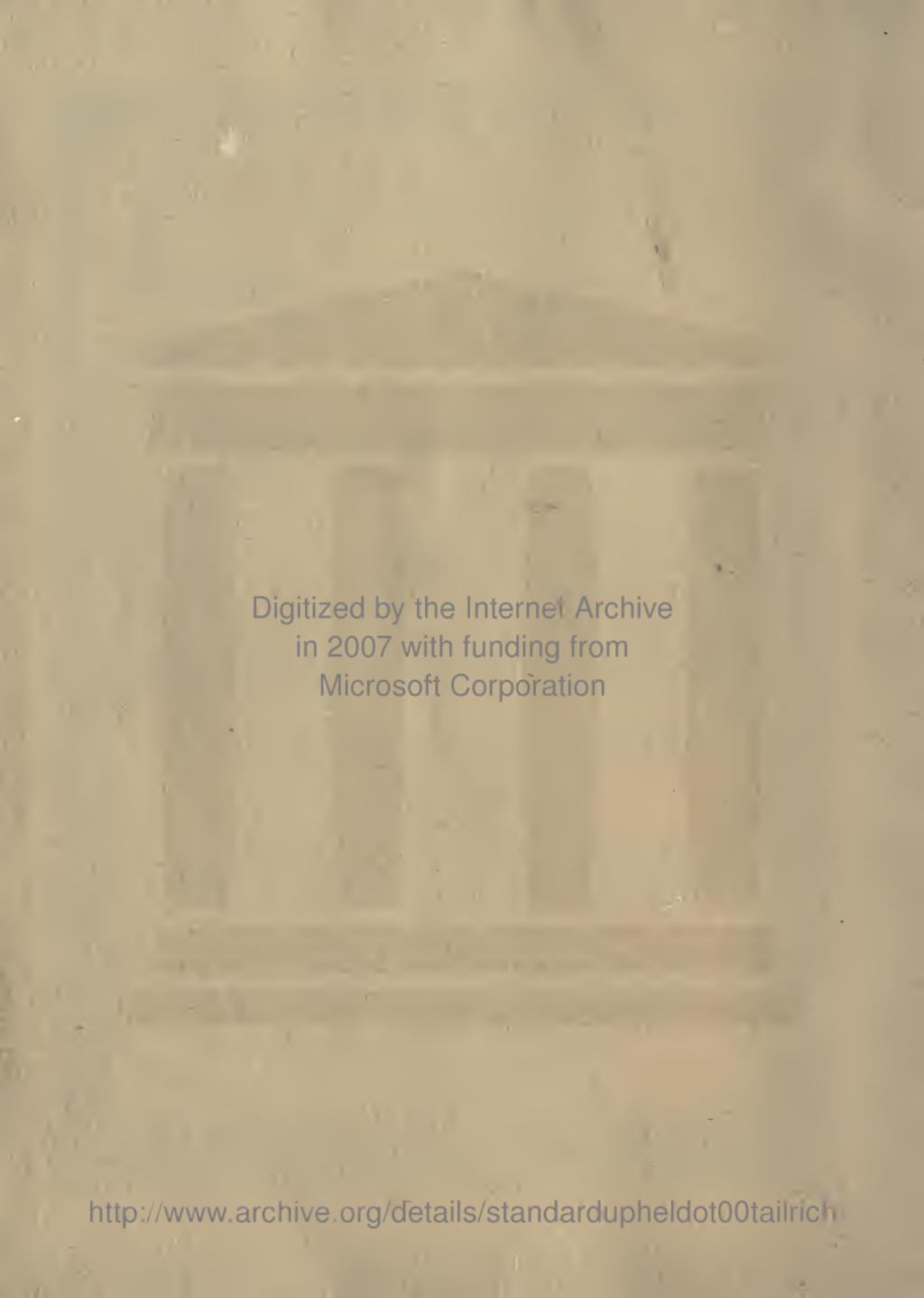
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THE STANDARD UPHELD AND OTHER
VERSES

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AND OTHER VERSES
BY MORGAN SHEPARD
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TO MY FRIEND
TOM WATKINS



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THE STANDARD UPHELD AND OTHER
VERSES

SHALL I CAST DOWN THE STANDARD OF MY LIFE?



HALL I throw down the Standard
ard of my Life,
And bend beneath the clutch of
circumstance?
Through trembling fingers shall
I view the strife
Hid by the wings of some un-
certain chance?

Tossed on the wave, or battered in the moil
Of striding days whose heavy hands
Press my face deep into the bloody soil,
Or cast my hopes across the desert sands,
Whirled by the rush and current of the flood
Shall I sweep passive stripped of mine own
will —

Self-pitying? Shall wounds or dripping
blood,
Or little tears, a weakling's chalice fill?
When night comes down upon the trodden
field
And day's last touch streaks my horizon red
With promise of new wounds to go unhealed
Shall I cry "Done" and wait with craven head

And eyes cast down a turning of the wheel?
Or shall I wait the breaking of a morn
Whose hand is soft, beneath whose touch I
kneel,
And smile, and hope and murmur prayers
forlorn?

Or shall I laugh in bitterness complete,
And turn my back with sneers upon the strife;
Or look for tracks made plain by braver feet;
And drop to Earth the Standard of my Life?

The Tides cease not to rise and backward
sweep;
The Sun will burn upon his destined track,
The Rocks unmoved stand grim beside the
deep.

The Living Wave—what might shall strike it
back
To silence dead?

Ye Gods and Men, shall I
Bend low beneath the random soulless hand
Of fate? Or quail to see the blackened sky?
All these are great, but I will fearless stand
An Atom to defy—a sharp Comparison.
And laugh with joy, and wait with teeth
close set,

And stretch my arms toward the smiting
Sun:
And hold my Standard close without regret—
'Tis mine! 'tis mine! though torn and bat-
tle rent;
And who shall claim its Legend for his own ?
—Not Man, nor Gods, nor Angels heaven-
sent—
'Tis mine! 'tis mine! each word upon it
grown
Out of the roots of my advancing Soul.
Legend of Blood, and wounds and loss and
sweat,
Legend of Hope—no Knell of doom shall toll
The death of such. Nor coils of vain regret
Hide its escutcheon plain from watching Gods.
No envious hands, or small suspicious sneers
Shall drag it low. No scourging of the rods.
Upon my head and heart, shall force the tears
Beyond a dimming of my human sight.
E'en were I blind (blood falling 'neath the
thorn)—
Still forward will I lean my head upright,
And count the scourging naught, when so
well borne.

My Standard shall be held above the swirl
And backward rush of disappointment's flood.
Held to my breast, when fiercest is the whirl
Of bitter doubts—oft tremblingly withstood.
Little or great, my Standard is my all:
In forward rush, in fall precipitate,
In backward rout; beneath the heavy pall
Of crippled faculties inadequate.
Outward 'tis held, defying circumstance,
Upward 'tis held, to hide the sins of birth,
Inward 'tis lock'd, to foil the web of Chance,
Wrapping me close, to meet the glaring
dearth
Of fitting mail. 'Tis mine! for all 'tis mine!
Deep in the Vale of my obscurity,
Or on the heights where close ambitions shine
Up to my eyes in near maturity.
E'en though I stand before the Door at last,
Bloody and worn, and panting from the Strife,
Even should then the powers fiercely cast
Me back again—the Standard of my Life
Shall wave above the torrent of my woe—
No! no! and no! I will not cast it down
'Til Death shall come—then shall its Legend
glow
Outwards and up—"This Standard is my own."

THE CHILD AND THE CROSS

A LIGHT breaks into the dark today,
 Soft with a touch of love
A light spreads over the shadows gray
 From open doors above—
Into the Night — the Night.

A Song sweeps over a silence vast
 Turning the darkness still,
Awaking to song a hopeless past—
 Hymn of a great good will—
 Anthem of Love—of Love.

New Hope blooms fresh from the bed of
 Night —
 Blooms with a luster mild,—
And spreads to gather the gentle light,
 Gift of the Holy Child,
 Peace and good will—good will—

The light breaks into each hidden place
 Of sorrow, death and loss.
The Love of the Child—a Human Face—
 Reflection of the Cross—
 Love of the Child—The CHILD.

MORNING

IN THE morning, when the mists of
Night
Cling to my Soul, and dim a needed
sight;
When scattered wide I see the threads of
power,
Which I would hold to guide me at that hour;
When all in doubt I stand—
Do thou then raise thy hand—
And show me where the Sun has kissed the
hills,
And say a light the mist-robed distance fills.
Then love me much, and start me on the way,
Bid me be brave to tread the Path that Day—
Such help canst thou give me—
O, how I look to thee!

AT NOON-TIDE, when beneath the smiting sun

I gaze with sickness, on the little done—
When all the Way, floats 'neath a warning
heat,
When crushed by cruel hands, Hope at my
feet
Lies low—a fallen thing—
Then do thou solace bring,

And point to virtues, where my heart saw
naught,
And say my skill has some fair semblance
caught
Of noble things — my work was not in vain,
And thou shalt quicken Hope so, Love, again
At noon-tide thou shalt be
Great solace unto me.

AT NIGHT when Darkness casts Her heavy
pall
O'er my past day, enfolding closely all
The humble things which I in fear have
wrought,
And blotting out a lesson learned or taught —
Hard striven for and lost —
Ah! none shall know the cost.
Then do thou stoop and bless me by the gift
Of thy deep love, and with thy dear hand lift
The cloak of Fear, which Night has cast on
me,
Then were no night and I shall plainly see —
Thou, dear, shalt be my light
At morn — mid-day and night.

SOWING

O SEEKEST thou fair Fruit where thou hast cast
The seeds of Thought or Good into the Soil?

Or dost thou sigh, when ripened days at last Show Fruitage strange, or weeds to pay for toil?

O, lookest thou for Blossoms in a Heart Which thy fond hand hath tilled with fearful care?

Thou weepest sore, when unrepaid thou art. The love-tilled Heart lies blossomless and bare—

O, sowest thou with Love and Fears,
O, reapest thou with Sighs and Tears?

REAPING

The Planting of the best thou hast to give Moved some dull mould to bloom with Fruitage fair.

Love, Hope and Fear may show no Fruit, yet live

In places new to thee, and blooming there Perfected grows the Blossom vainly sought. The Heart love-tilled holds worlds to thee unknown,

Fields shining bright with Flowers of thy
Thought —

Seek thou that place and pluck the Fruit
there grown.

O, hast thou sown with tears of Love ?
Thy Blossoms touch the Skies above !

THE SEED AND THE WORD

 HE planted seed
By hearts and hands,
Wins it a meed
'Mid stones and barren sands ?

The living word
From earnest tongue
Is it oft heard
On the strings of hearts tight strung ?

The sacred dew—
(Tears from a soul,)
Are there too few
To weave a chaplet full ?

Love, love—cold dead,
Killed by the Night—
What lives instead
To touch in Days with Light ?

INTO MY CRYSTAL WORLD

I NTO MY Crystal World I gaze;
Sun and green water and blue—
Into a mystic coil of days
Spun from the Sun and thoughts
of you,

Sun and green water and blue—
Deep in my Crystal World.

Far in the deeps I faintly see
Clouds and hills, meadows and streams—
A fair white hand held out to me.

My world is small and the distance
seems

But little over the meadows and streams,
Over my Crystal World.

I'll hasten into my World full fair—

Sun and green glistening Sands—

Straight to the place, my sweet Love, where
You wait for me with outstretched hands.

The sun has kissed my Crystal Land,
Kissed my Crystal World.

THE SMILE

A SMILE is a Flower blooming fair—
Its petals often cover
Sighs in the heart or places where
The wings of Sorrow hover.

A smile is a Bird whose hopeful wing
Gleams thro' the sky of Sorrow.
At night in the dark I hear it sing.
A Joy awaits the Morrow!

A smile is a Brook that finds its way
Through desert Hearts and dreary.
Drink of the Brook! Its Waters may
Give strength if thou art weary.

A smile is an easy thing to build
Before our Cares or after—
And smiling once, we often gild
Our sombre woes with laughter.

Then why not smile, for the Day is brief;
The Night has many hours!
Then why not smile and hide a grief
Beneath a wreath of Flowers?

THE CAT

I'VE known thee long, but still I know
thee not;
Full faith I have, which hath no trust
begot;
Deep in thine eyes both old and new I see;
In thy still gaze is Simple Mystery.
Ask I for aught, thy "Yea" oft means a
"Nay."
Hast thou a heart? O, Who on Earth can
say?
For a caress, what coin wilt thou return?
When thou art found, what new thing shall
I learn?
Stay I or go—hast thou one small regret?
All this is so my heart tells me—and yet
I must love thee—Thus mending shall
unmend,
And questioning—I learn naught in the end.

A FEATHER FROM THE WING OF TIME

I PLUCK'D a feather from Time's beating wings—

I crushed it in my hand,

I pressed it to my eyes—

Blindly I hastened o'er the shadow land—

Blindly I hastened through the glowing skies

To where a white bird sings.

Voiceless I press the feather to my face

And wait—and hold—and cast—

And speed my Soul away;

And thrust my heart far back into the past

And forward into some still unborn day,

Some as yet unseen place.

Each day I seek an answer in my heart.

(The feather pluck'd for you!

The Soul thrust into space!)

I hold the hours and Time shall not undo

The woven web, nor distance hide your face.

A singing bird thou art—

The plume was pluck'd for you.

THE REED

GHOU art the Child, and I the weary
Man,
Thou art the Bud, and I the broken
Reed;

Thy years reach out to cover in their span
Things all uniform'd or some unnam'd
meed.

To make thy days complete,
Dear Marguerite.

Each day new born is one fair petal turned,
Then — then, I look the deeper in thy soul
And find there hid some precious lesson
learned

By thy young heart — to build the perfect
whole —

So is the Flower sweet,
Dear Marguerite.

And I, the Reed, breathe low a prayer for thee,
Hopes without words, O might I point
the ways

Which I know true — or lead thee happily
Till thou could'st see the best of coming
Days

Waiting thy willing feet,
Dear Marguerite!

Bent though I be, and broken in the strife
To gain some goal or touch some hidden
end,

May I not point all bended to a Life
Open to thee — may I not counsel lend
That is with love replete,
Dear Marguerite ?

Come then to me, thy youth will bless my age;
Look, look to me, thy Life may lift my
eyes
To gaze with thee, upon the open page
All fair for thee. Then will I see thy
Skies,
And catch thy fragrance sweet,
Dear Marguerite.

YEARS AND TEARS

I SEE the Years cut deep into the mould,
I see new tears, and seeing them,
grow old.
Each smile new born, a moment
briefly gleams.

All Hopes at morn are shadows of my dreams.
Youth — youth has fled, a ragged cloak I wear.
Time makes no bed. The weight of days I bear.

WHITE AND RED

I GAZED with cold eyes into a Flower's heart;
My life-worn soul had whispered low to me,
" Go, cast thy power and thy perfected art
Into the Flower's soul, and note what thou
shalt see."

Then looked I coldly into the Blossom's heart,
Rose there a white smile, that touched the
piercing light
Of eyes that fell not, but slowly forced apart
Doors that were better shut to a Sun so bright.

Then fiercely I kissed the white heart of the
flower,
That instant it grew beneath my heart's cold
breath
A thing changed blood red, slipping lower and
lower
Into its petals, touched with the mark of death.

Then struck I sharply on the Blossom door,
Might there not again a fair white smile arise
White out of silence, where pure it slept before
I awoke it by the still, cold gaze of my eyes.

No whiteness shone through, or light of purity
Fell on the darkness of the place where I stood,
But through a half-closed door I could plainly
see

A red light that glowed, like sunlight through
Man's blood.

BARRIERS

I DARE not look too long, dear, in
thine eyes,
For fear that sight too clear should
come to mine;

For fear that I should see, thin-veiled, in thine
Something I dread to find, but know would
rise

Like sea mists creeping o'er the Summer skies.
'Tis better far to sip than waste the wine,
Wiser to hope unbid, than to repine,
Sweeter to weave a web than sever ties.

Mayhap my heart which hides its burning light,
Doth ask no more than that its flame may glow
Warm in my soul until my Lamp will show
Some sacred places, where my love and sight
Will hold secure the little that I see,
Which I may think is mine, and kept for me.

OUT OF THE HEART

A GREEN and simple blade of grass
A humble blossom hidden—
A human breath upon a glass—
A brown bird heart-full bidden
To grow and gleam,
To bloom and beam,
To spread and die,
To sing and fly,
Out of the heart—all from the heart.

A sigh for joy—a cry of pain,
An answer unexpected—
The clouds, the clear, the sun, the rain,
The smiles or tears reflected—
All in a day,
All by the way,
All vivid hours,
All from the bowers
Of one young heart—alas grown old!

MARY

STAY Child a moment with me here—
Close, close by me;
You do not know how precious—
O! how dear

Your waiting is to me. You saw a tear
Slip down upon my cheek—Ah! do not fear,

You shall not see

Another such—besides, how could I cry
When I am gay?

No, dear, that was not quite a tear, but my
Great love for you, like sea waves mounting
high.

One drop of Love out of the sky
To bless the day.

I wonder, dear Child, could I ever tell
What made that tear,

The tear that came and down my hard cheek
fell?

Ah! no, I cannot, but this do I know well—
For riches great I would refuse to sell
That moment dear.

TO PHŒBE

DEAR Phœbe, could I only touch your eyes —

Not with my lips,
But with the tips

Of fingers that are burning with a deep and holy yearning.

A shadow sweetly lies
In your eyes.

Dear Phœbe, there's a flower on your lips,—

A flower Word,
Will it be heard

Beyond the green and growing, where the winds of youth are blowing ?

A bird of longing sips
From your lips.

Dear Phœbe, there's a white cloud on your brow —

Drift from the skies
Of your pure eyes.

The cloud is softly drifting, and a light is gently lifting

The dream of wonder now
From your brow.

Dear Phœbe, I would fathom your deep eyes
With sympathy,
Then might there be
An instant's sight exposing, all the bloom of
Dreams reposing
Down where one flower dies
In your eyes.

Suggested by XXXVI (Poems of
W. E. HENLEY)

AT DUSK when the mists of sadness
Slip over the dull gray sea,
A song floats out on the silence —
A sacred memory.

At night when the Woman passes
Over the place of tears,
She crushes a blood-red blossom —
But none of the song she hears.

She smites with a wanton blindness
The stem and the broken leaves,
Her robe and her knees are bloody —
But none of the wreck she sees.

Each scar of the Woman's smiting,
Each print of her passing feet
Creeps up on the misty stillness
To join in a hymn complete.

The eyes of the Woman wanton
Seek that which she may not find;
For the heart she bruised and tortured
Sings sweet to the evening wind.

For the living notes that gather
To make a chain of song
Reach not to the ears of the Woman
Who passes unblessed along.

THE RED BEAD

OGIVE me back the gathered chain of
days:
It once was mine, I've kissed it oft in
prayer!

One blood-red bead upon your bosom stays—
And grows more red because it lingers there.
Is it a bead, or blood upon your breast?
Your blood or mine, that burns your bosom
bare?

It lies content—but is it painless rest?
Or gleams it plain, a day of red despair?

Fair is the place whereon it makes its bed:
'Tis sadly fair and white with purity.
But with each breath heart-drawn a living red
Mounts with your breast—in pulsing misery.

O, give me back the glowing sacred chain
Of gathered days, for I would count them
through
My hands, and touch the blood-red one, and
stain
My lips with it, my eyes with it,—for you
Have worn it long upon your neck and breast!
My chain of Days lacks one to make complete

A broken strand. Give back the Day-chain lest
All gathered days fall scattered at your feet.

The red day fades, gone is the ruddy stain,
But through its depths your gleaming breast
I see;

The fading day will ne'er gleam red again,
And still there gleams the star of misery.

A THOUGHT

FROM a wordless soul a Thought was
born

(Part of a Wordless Whole)—

The light of the sun at early morn
Blinded the Silent Soul.

It hid its face from the glare of day,
Seeking a shadow where it lay.

Who shall console,
Who shall console?

Gather ye flowers at even' sought,
Flowers of souls and lives,

Scatter them over the wordless Thought,
Over the Soul that strives

To give a new garland to the light,
Plucked from the meadows of speechless night.

New buds it gives,
New fields it gives.

Under the shadows the blossoms lie
(Blossoms lovingly brought)—
Mark how they fade and wither and die;
Where are the words ye sought?
Fled to the Home of the waiting Soul,
Where words bloom not, where thoughts
console.
Death of a Thought,
Life of a Thought.

MY FANCY

GHE round hills gleam and quiver
A soft and full-ripe yellow—
The canyon is a river
Of flowing green; and mellow
Is all the Earth.

The canyon river wanders
And meets the distant ocean.
The day its treasures squanders
In thoughtless dream devotion—
The day's sweet dream.

A Soul sleeps near a mountain
Where hearts and hopes are taken,
Where flows unchecked a fountain—
When shall the Soul awaken ?
For it is Day.

THE LITTLE WORLD

MY Little World has hidden
 Behind the mists of thought
Where none save One is bidden —
 Where none save One is sought.

My World lies all uncertain,
 For oft it flows and drifts
Behind a gauzy curtain
 Which waves in hazy rifts.

But when the mists have lifted
 I seek my little land
And see my fancies sifted
 All gold upon the sand.

The little waves slip smiling
 Upon a silver beach ;
The Hills of Thought lie piling
 Soft blue within my reach.

The forest waves in billows
 Of deep and velvet green —
Beside a stream the willows
 All languorous careen.

The sky stoops low and kisses

The eyelids of the hills —

The hills where sleeping bliss is

Where memory fulfils .

Each wish of my heart yearnings.

Lost links to fill a chain.

Cool spots in deserts burning,

Forgetfulness of pain.

My world of Fancy beaming

Beneath perfected thought,

Beneath the luster gleaming

Of fancy fully caught —

' Tis mine, 'tis mine entire —

From hill to sleeping plain ;

Perfection of desire

Till come the mists again.

And there I sit and ponder —

Or sing into the wind ;

Or through the meadows wander

Until my love I find.

I wait, for sweet is waiting —

The moments tremble past,

Their beauty naught abating.

Then comes my love at last.

I see the light in showers
Of gems about her feet,
Where gleam the speechless flowers
In worship all complete.

She treads the happy grasses,
Her robe across them slips —
They sigh sad when she passes
Beyond their loving lips.

My little World completed !
My World of will and thought —
My Dear World, oft repeated,
For there my love is sought.

THROUGH THE TREES

COMES my Love beneath the trees,
Blossoms rise to kiss her knees,
All a-quiver are the leaves,
Lest too loud the song shall be
Of the love they hold for her—
Of the homage greater far
Than the deep sky or the sea.
Grasses lift their green to meet
Each dear burden of her feet—
Perfumed breezes shyly greet
Spots of sun and flowers sweet.
For the breeze would gently show
How the wind of Love may blow:
Passing by would kiss her brow,
Passing by might touch her feet.
Comes my Love all robed in green,
One red flower in her hair
Flashes pride for being there.
One red flower never seen
Lifts and falls upon her breast,
Blooms content in lang'rous rest,
Flower of a sacred quest.
Comes my Love along the way,
Shines the wonder of the day

On her face and on her hair,
On her soft neck witching white—
Neck and breast of lovely might—
Floods of joy and laughter gay—
Light shines in her maiden eyes.
Notes she aught save loving skies—
Sun and blossoms, birds and trees,
Grasses green that kiss her knees ?

Comes she then with parted lips
Touching with her finger tips
Tender buds or dry rose-hips.
Is there aught my dear Love sees
Save the Love she passes through ?—
Seeing her the Love which grew,
Grew and blossomed while she stood
Sweet with splendors of the Wood,
Fresh as flowers wet with dew.

Comes my Love close where I stand
Armour locked and lance in hand.
Visor closed o'er cloud-dark face.
Floods the wonder of her grace—
Spreads the spell of this dear place.
Speeds the shadow from the land—
Fades the evil from my brow.
Stops my dear Love then to show

Her sweet face to leaf and bough.
Bud and flower, twig and green,
Have a sacred vision seen.
Looks my dear Love where I stand
Armour cased and lance in hand.
Comes she then,—eyes looking through
Trees and hills into the blue
In sweet peace awaiting her—
Stops she then, a moment where
Steel weighs down the yielding mould.
Sun of Glory, Time of Gold,
Do thou here my dear One hold
Till I lift the closing steel,
Till I kiss her waiting feet,
Till rejoicing much I feel
Joy is caught, my Love is won
From the trees and from the sun.

Takes she now the flower rare
From her breast all gleaming bare,
Drops she then the flower where
Weight of armour, weight of steel
Press in mould an iron heel—
Passes then my love along
Paths of joy and spots of song.
Passes she with smiles between

Hanging boughs and places green
(Fairer places ne'er have been),
Gleams her dress a moment bright—
Shines the flower in her hair—
Sadness holds my body there,
Sadness mounting to despair.
Comes a time when straining sight
Sees no more her beaming face
Making sacred all the place.—
Look I then through visor bar
At a red spot lying near—
Weight of iron, strength of steel
Pressing down a cruel heel.
Look I then upon a star
Gleaming hot up to my face—
Pass I then beneath the trees,
Smiting with unknowing knees
Green and flowers of the place.
Flower red and robe of green !
Fairest blossom ever seen !
Pass I o'er a dead delight
'Neath the trees into the Night.

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HAVE BEEN MADE OF WHICH FIVE HUNDRED ARE
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THIS BOOK IS NUMBER 119

the country. The author, however, does not seem to have been able to get at any of the original sources of information, and the book is not a history, but a collection of extracts from the histories of the various countries, and the author's own comments on them. The book is well written, and the author's style is clear and interesting. The book is well produced, and the illustrations are good. The book is well worth reading, and it is a valuable addition to any library.

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